The Theosophical FORUM

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THE LAW OF SELFISHNESS.

Thrust your finger in a pail of still water. You will displace many drops, giving them an outward impulse. Each and every drop of water in the pail will feel this outward impulse, for it will be imparted by each drop to the next.

But soon the limit of the environment is reached and now each atom reverses the impulse and sends it back to the center of disturbance—an impulse inward. With each atom and drop the inward impulse is exactly equal to the outward impulse, and what is true of them is true of the whole mass. The inward impulse is exactly equal to the outward.

This is the law of "compensatory vibration." In physics it is true at all times, in all places, and under all conditions. Action and reaction are equal—among the planets, or among the molecules or atoms of them. It is not only the law of this prakritic globe on which we live, but the law of the etheric globe (having the sun for its center) in which we live, and from which we get all force.

It is not only the law of all action, but of life, and thought. It is as true in morals as in physics, for morals are but the rules of right physical living—of living in harmony with our inheritance and environment. In this ocean of ether surrounding us we are centers of energy, giving off impulses to others that are bound to return to us exactly equal to their initial outward force.

Each and every action on our part affects us for good or ill only *after it has passed through and affected others,* for good or ill and its affect upon us will always be the exact amount of the total effect

on others. The sum total of the outward affect on all the drops of water is the exact amount of the inward impulse on the disturbing agent, and so it is with a good deed or evil deed—the effect upon us is the same total of all its effects on mankind. If we injure a man, he does not feel all the injury; some of that injury passes through him to another, and from him to another. The amount of that injury is not measured by the injury to the nearest, but by the injury to all in the chain; and it is this total that returns to us. This is true of benefits as well as injuries—of all action. We cannot benefit ourselves except by benefiting some one else; nor injure ourselves except by injuring some one else. All change in ourselves is the result of reflex action, of what we have done to others.

The highest, noblest, purest life is one of absolute and perfect Selfishness. Self is the god we should worship. Every action should be weighed and measured by its final effect upon ourselves, and the stronger the selfishness, the more we think of ourselves and the less we think of others, the better it is for ourselves and for mankind. We cannot really help others; we can only help ourselves. The best we can do is to create circumstances wherein others may, if they choose, help themselves as we help ourselves. Each one is the architect of his own fortune; each works out his own salvation; but he works it out through the reflex action upon himself of what he has done for others.

It is time the electroplated morality that tells men they must "be good because it is good to be good," which furnishes no incentive to goodness and declares "the wicked flourish like a green bay tree," should be supplanted by a morality that will give men a motive for serving their fellows—a motive that will call for their best and strongest effort. The morality of Selfishness furnishes the strongest incentive by which men can be influenced. It is the "religion" of science, and knowledge, and common sense.

Intuitionally men recognize the law of Karma. "Cast thy bread upon the waters and it will return after many days" was written milleniums ago. But this recognition is vague and unformed. It is not understood as it should be—that it is a cold scientific fact.

JANAKA KING OF THE VIDEHAS.

(Brhad Aranyaka Upanishad.)

Janaka King of the Videhas offered a sacrifice with many gifts. And thither were gathered together the Priests of the Kurus and Panchalas. In Janaka King of the Videhas there arose a desire to know which of these Brahman priests was most deeply initiated in the hereditary wisdom. So he set apart a thousand cows, and on the horns of each were set ten measures of gold.

Then he said to them: Venerable Brahmans, whichever of you is strongest in the Eternal, let him drive home these cows.

But the Brahmans were too little confident in themselves to do this. Therefore Yajnavalkya spoke to his disciple, saying: Beloved, drive home these lowing kine. Thus spoke the sage.

But the Brahman priests were wroth, saying: How does he call himself the wisest among us?

Now Ashvala was the Sacrificer of King Janaka; he therefore spoke to Yajnavalkya, saying: In truth, Yajnavalkya, thou art wisest among us, and as our wisest, we pay reverence to thee. Yet we too were desirous to possess these cows.—Therefore Ashvala took to questioning Yajnavalkya.

Yajnavalkya, he said to him, all this world is enfolded by death, held in sway by death. By whom, then, as sacrificer does he who offers sacrifice free himself from the grasp of death?

By offering sacrifice through the Fire and the Word, he replied; for the Word is the giver of sacrifice, and the Word is Fire. Therefore the Word is the sacrificer, it is freedom and deliverance.

Ashvala again asked him, saying: Yajnavalkya, as all this world is enfolded by day and night, and under the sway of day and night, by whom does he who offers sacrifice free himself from the grasp of day and night?

By offering through Vision and the Sun, he replied; for Vision is the overseer of the sacrifice, and what Vision is in us, the Sun is above us; it is the overseer, it is freedom and deliverance.

Ashvala again asked him, saying: Yajnavalkya, all this world is enfolded by the dark moon and the bright moon, held in sway by the dark moon and the bright moon; by whom, then, does he who offers sacrifice free himself from the dark moon and the bright moon?

By offering through the Breath, the Life, he replied. For the Life is the chanter of the sacrifice, and the Life is the Great Breath. It is the chanter, it is freedom and deliverance.

Ashvala again asked him, saying: Yajnavalkya, as this firmament is beginningless, by what ascent does the sacrificer ascend to the heavenly world?

By the moonlike mind as chief-priest, he replied; for Mind is the chief-priest of the sacrifice. And what mind is here, the moon is there. It is the chief-priest, it is freedom, it is deliverance. It is perfect freedom and wealth.

Ashvala again asked him, saying: Yajnavalkya, with how many Vedic verses will the offering priests celebrate this sacrifice to-day?

With three, he replied.

Which are the three? he asked.

The verses of invocation, of oblation, of culmination, he answered.

What will he win by these?

All things that live in the world, he answered.

Ashvala again asked him, saying: Yajnavalkya, how many oblations will the priest offer to-day?

Three, he replied.

Which are the three?

The oblations that blaze up; the oblations that crackle loud; the oblations that sink low, he replied.

What does he gain by these?

As for the oblations which flame up, by them he gains the world of the shining powers, he replied; for the world of the shining powers shines like flame. By the oblations which crackle loud, he gains the world of the fathers, for the world of the fathers is full of sound. And the oblations which sink low, by them he gains the world of men, for the world of men is beneath.

Ashvala again asked him, saying: Yajnavalkya, through how many shining powers does the Brahman priest protect the sacrifice on the southern side?

By one, he replied.

Which is the one?

Mind, he replied; for mind is everlasting. The all-powers are everlasting; by Mind he gains the everlasting world.

Ashvala again asked him, saying: Yajnavalkya, how many songs of praise will the chanter offer in praise at this sacrifice to-day?

Three, he replied.

Which are the three?

The chants of invocation, of oblation, of culmination, he answered.

And how are they related with the soul?

The forward-life is the chant of invocation; the downward-life is the chant of oblation; the distributing-life is the chant of culmination.

What worlds does he gain by these?

By the chant of invocation, he gains this earth; by the chant of oblation, he gains the midworld; by the chant of culmination, he gains the heavenly world.

Then Ashvala was silent.

Thereupon Ritabhaga's son, of the line of Jaratkaru, asked him, saying: Yajnavalkya, how many are the powers that grasp, and how many are the outer powers corresponding to them?

Eight powers, he replied, and eight outer powers.

And these eight powers and outer powers, which are they?

The forward-breath is a power, and to it corresponds the downward-breath; for by the downward breath a man perceives odors.

The word is a power, and with it names correspond; for by the word a man pronounces names.

Taste is a power, and with it savor corresponds; for by the power of taste a man perceives savors.

Vision is a power, and with it form corresponds; for by vision a man perceives forms.

Hearing is a power, and with it sounds correspond; for by hearing a man apprehends sounds.

Mind is a power, and with it corresponds desire; for by the mind a man desires desires.

Hands are a power, and with them work corresponds; for with the hands a man carries out his work.

Touch is a power, and with it contacts correspond; for through the power of touch a man distinguishes contacts.

These are the eight powers with their correspondences.

Ritabhaga's son again asked him, saying: Yajnavalkya, since all this world is the food of death, what divinity is there who in turn feeds on death?

Fire is death, and fire is the food of the waters; therefore the waters conquer death.

Ritabhaga's son again asked him, saying: Yajnavalkya, when a man here dies, the life-powers ascend from him—

No, replied Yajnavalkya; they become blended in one, even here; he gives up the ghost, his body is filled with air, and so dying he enters into rest.

Ritabhaga's son again asked him, saying: Yajnavalkya, when a man here dies, what does not leave him?

Name, he replied; for name is endless as the shining all-powers are endless. By this, he conquers his world.

Ritabhaga's son again asked him, saying: Yajnavalkya, as in the case of a man here who has died, the word in him is absorbed in Fire, the life-breath enters the Breath, vision enters the sun, mind enters the lunar world, hearing enters the spaces, the body enters the ether, the hair and the down of his body enter plants, his blood is absorbed in the waters,—where is the man then?

And he replied: Take my hand, beloved son of Ritabhaga; we two must speak of this, for it cannot be spoken here in the assembly.

So they two went apart. And what they spoke of, was the continuity of works, and what they praised was the continuity of works. By holy works a man comes to a holy birth; by evil works, he comes to an evil birth.

Then Ritabhaga's son was silent.

Then Bhujyu, grandson of Lahya asked him, saying: Yajnavalkya, we were wandering as pilgrims in the land of the Madras, and came to the house of a certain Patanchala, of the Kapi family; he had a daughter who was possessed by a spirit. We asked who he was, and he replied that he was Sudhanvan, of the line of Angiras. Then, while we were inquiring concerning the divisions of the world, we asked him where were the sons of Parikshit. This I now ask you, Yajnavalkya: Where were the sons of Parikshit?

Yajnavalkya answered: He told you this: The sons of Parikshit dwell there whither go those who offer the horse-sacrifice.

Whither go they who offer the horse-sacrifice?

Yajnavalkya answered: This sphere measures two and thirty days' journeys of the chariots of the gods. At twice that distance, the earth encircles it all. At twice that distance, the ocean encircles the whole earth. Then narrow as the edge of a razor or a fly's wing, at so small an interval lies the ether. The Ruler, taking the form of a well-winged bird, gave this to the great Breath. The great Breath, taking it up within himself, went thither where go those who offer the horse-sacrifice. Thus in a parable he uttered the praises of the great Breath. Therefore the great Breath is the individual spirit, and the waters are the universal spirit. He conquers the second death who thus knows.

Then Bhujyu, son of Lahya's son, was silent.

Then Ushasta of the family of Chakra asked him, saying: Yajnavalkya, What is the visible immediate Eternal? What is the Soul? This declare unto me.

This is the Soul, which dwells within all.

Which, Yajnavalkya, is within all?

He who breathes forth through the forward-breath, this is your soul who dwells within all.

He who breathes downward through the downward-breath, this is your soul who dwells within all.

He who breathes apart with the distributing-breath, this is your soul who dwells within all.

He who breathes upward through the upward-breath, this is your soul who dwells within all.

Ushasta of the family of Chakra again asked him, saying: Just as a man might say: this is a cow, this is a horse,—so that the thing spoken of is pointed out,—in this same way declare to me what is the visible immediate Eternal, and what is the Soul which dwells within all.

Yajnavalkya answered him, saying: You cannot behold him who sees vision; you cannot hear him who hears hearing; you cannot think of the thinker of thought; you cannot understand him who understands understanding. This is the Soul who dwells within all, and all things but the Soul are subject to sorrow.

Then Ushasta of the family of Chakra was silent.

(*To be continued.*)

LOVE AND COMPASSION.

Cultivate love in your own nature for friend and foe and all who touch your life. You must not weep for the sins of the world, but amend them. Cut yourself adrift from self-identifying ties by loving all with a boundless love like the love of the Infinite. It will save you from all sin and evil, from longing for what is not your own, from selfishness.

Keep the heart light, strong, and even. See no differences with the heart, know that they exist with the brain, and amend them with your great love and compassion. Whatever the ties of life, be faithful to them, failing in no duty of relationships, and a friend to all. Feeling the ties of friendship as of the highest and purest human love because it is impersonal and savors not of self. One may love husband because of possession, parents because of long association, kinship and duty, children because in some measure they are self reproduced—but the love of friend proves something within oneself that can go forth to others in trust and confidence. It is an expression of faith. Therefore love *all* with the love of friendship even though the other loves and ties exist.

Do not forget to be impersonal and the cultivation of love towards all will help you to the elimination of self. Alone you must face the tempests of the world. Higher Powers cannot help you in those things. Your nature is strong, but your vanity great or you would not be so badly hurt. Pursue your onward course unmolested by friend or foe—modified by their judgments of you if your own higher thoughts find them correct.

For all are our mirrors and show us back as we appear; sometimes this appearance tallies with the real—sometimes it does not. Some few can do more than mirror—they can analyze and they can and should help us, that is we should avail ourselves of their ability to help us. Mark out your course in life in spiritual things—it is enough—the others will fall in line. In this much you are right, you who have set your faces towards the Light, you cannot "plan" the material life, for the spiritual life governs the physical, but this, the spiritual, should be clear and have definite purposes.

"Guard thou the Lower lest it soil the Higher." In working out the physical as the spiritual dictates, danger of becoming in-

volved in physical interests, in results, lurks, and you may become entangled. Here ambition, envy, vanity, strife, all lurk—tigers hiding along your pathway ready to spring upon you, drag you down and devour you. Proceed upon your way then with the Spiritual Light always before you, always the one thing to be attained. All results that are in your line of progress being as the debris of your true building—the spiritual upraising of mankind.

Filled and flooded with the Spiritual Light (that Light of your own Higher Self) no lurking beast can touch you—if your only aim is to show It forth to others. All evil things fall away from you and cannot touch you. Better to be a medium for Light to shine through than a block that cuts it off from others. The former you become if the heart is filled with compassionate love towards all—but if hatred and strife are permitted to dwell in the heart they block the way of Its onward flow. Some day you may become that Light Itself.

Brood over and foster your thoughts divine. Shield them from the cold winds of doubt, distrust of Self and Masters: distrust of Higher Powers and their ability to help you when and how they will, but their will is with the Law. Feed them, these thoughts divine, upon the remembrance that the Great Ones linger near but to aid, and wait only for the day when you make it possible.

In every way in your power (this does not mean in neglect of duty to any living thing) fit your vehicle to the Master's work and to your own uplifting. Consider it an instrument that must be made of finest fibre, mellowed with Time's hand throughout the ages—of most perfect workmanship; then with Soul knowledge attune it, and with the bow of Spirit give forth to the world soul-stirring strains that shall yield the common recognition of that which dwells within each heart. Modify its melody to the small and to the great, attune its chords to the needs of all. Teach Harmony that becomes Unity as the seven colors are blended in the one white ray of sunlight. Vibrate to each need of every human soul. Sometimes this will tear you asunder, then the work must be done over again and so ultimately the perfect instrument is made. This is one version of the legend of old which taught that old masters played with instruments, strung with human entrails. So they did—but they were their own—"Bowels of Compassion" indeed until ultimately they evolved the perfect harmony of self which ever tends to uplift the world.

"THE FINEST STORY IN THE WORLD."

In nearly all the one hundred and thirty stories by Rudyard Kipling, "traces," as the chemist would say, will be found of theosophical thought; but only one is a distinctly theosophical story, on theosophical lines, making clear as it does the correctness of certain theosophical teaching and answering a very common question—why we do not remember our past incarnations. This is "The Finest Story in the World," and it is worthy of very careful reading.

The hero of the story is a bank-clerk, Charlie Mears, a boy of twenty, who aspires to be a poet and playwright, and writes stories for "the penny-in-the-slot journals"—or rather sends stories to them. Kipling has the class idea so strongly implanted in him —is is a peculiarity of colonials—that Charlie is to him, naturally a cad for trying to better his condition in life, or get any of the "sweetness and light" that comes from other than manual labor. He represents him as ignorant, vain, vulgar, small, petty, mean. One day Charlie, who has to write at home on the edge of a wash-stand, asks leave to write a story in Kipling's room. He writes for a little while, but the words will not come, and he tells the story to Kipling.

> " I looked at him wondering whether it were possible
> " that he did not know the originality, the power of the
> " notion that had come his way. Charlie babbled on
> " serenely. * * I heard him out to the end. It would
> " be folly to allow his thought to remain in his own inept
> " hands, when I could do so much with it."

Kipling buys it from Charlie for $25, and then the fun begins. It is a story of a galley, and Charlie describes the life on the lower deck, where the hero is chained to the oar, with a wealth of detail—as if he were looking at it.

> " He went away and I wondered how a bank clerk aged
> " twenty could put into my hands, with a profligate
> " abundance of detail, all given with absolute assurance,
> " this story of extravagant and blood thirsty adventure in
> " unnamed seas. He had led his hero a desperate dance
> " through revolt against the overseers to command a ship

" of his own and the ultimate establishment of a kingdom
" on an island 'somewhere in the seas you know.' "

Next visit Charlie has lots more to tell. But the cosmic memory has evidently played a trick on him, for this time his talk is of another slave, another galley, another set of detail. On a piece of paper, Charlie marks what the men used to scratch on their oar blades.

He does not "know that it has any meaning in English, but the marks mean to the men that they are tired of slaving in galleys." Kipling takes the scratches to the Greek expert at the British Museum, who reads them as Charlie did.

" I fled without a word of thanks, explanation or
" apology. To me of all men had been given the chance
" to write the most marvellous tale in the world, nothing
" less than the story of a Greek galley slave *as told by him-*
" *self*. Small wonder that his dreaming had seemed real
" to Charlie. The Fates that are so careful to shut the
" doors of each successive life behind us, had in this case
" been neglectful and Charlie was looking, though he did
" not know, where never man had been permitted to look
" with full knowledge since time began. * * I—I alone
" held this jewel to my hand for the cutting and polishing."

But Charlie had invested his five pounds in Byron, Shelley and Keats and gone on a mental drunk. He would not talk, until Kipling read to him Longfellow's "King Olaf." "That's *true*," Charlie gasps, "how could he have known how the ships crash and the oars rip out?" Then Charlie, under the excitement, tells a story of a vivid dream, as he thinks, of a fight of that kind in which he was drowned. It was a story of Viking adventure under Thorfin, Karlsefin, and of a fight in Vineland. Then Charlie becomes absorbed in Longfellow and won't talk. He wants to read.

" Conceive yourself at the door of the world's treasure
" house guarded by a child—an idle, irresponsible child
" playing knuckle bones—on whose favor depends the
" gift of the key, and you will imagine one half my tor-
" ment. I could only wait and watch, but I went to bed
" that night full of the wildest imaginings. If I came to full

" knowledge of anything at all it would not be one life of
" the soul in Charlie Mears' body, but half a dozen—half
" dozen several and separate existences spent on blue water
" in the morning of the world."

The story tells how he tries to get Charlie to talk, and how he fails. Then he consults Grish Chunder, a Hindoo friend, who remarks:

" It is of course an old tale with us, but to happen to
" an Englishman—a cow-fed *Mlechh*—an outcast. That
" is most peculiar."

After three or four pages of explanation of how and why "the doors are closed," Grish Chunder says:

" Be quick, he will not last long."
" How do you mean?"
" He has never, so far, thought about a woman. One
" kiss that he gives back again, and remembers, will cure
" all this nonsense."

More interviews with Charlie, more thrilling details of Charlie's adventures in the dim abyss of past lives. At last the author imagines he can cheat the Lords of Life and Death, getting, through Charlie at some of their jealously guarded secrets.

But next time Charlie brings a love poem and "her" picture. The girl has a curly head and a loose mouth. Dull commonplace moral stagnation, an inept existence in a musty little shop in one of the dreary back streets of London—such is the price many a Charlie paid for a curly head and a loose mouth.

So naturally the experiment is over.

" Now I understand, comments Kipling, why the Lords
" of Life and Death shut the doors so carefully behind us.
" It is that we may not remember our first and most beauti-
" ful wooings. Were it not so our world would be with-
" out inhabitants in a hundred years."
" Now, about that galley story," I said in a pause in the
" rush of his speech.
" Charlie looked up as though he had been hit. "The
" galley—what galley? Good Heavens, don't joke man!
" This is serious."
" Grish Chunder was right. Charlie had tasted the love
" of woman that kills remembrance and the finest story in
" the world would never be written.

THE GENIUS OF THE NEW ERA.

There is first the intuition of the Soul; that haunting vision of might and joy that has been hovering over us through the ages. We have sought that joy through the natural world; through long lives of thirsty desire, and ever, as our hands seemed to be closing upon the treasure, it has vanished away, leaving our hearts desolate, longing for the immortal. We have sought the Soul through long ages of human life, following it in hope and fear, in desire and hate, in pleasure and sorrow, and again we have thought to surprise the eternal secret, and capture that alluring joy of the immortals. But we are seeking still, and ever within our hearts is that immortal longing, haunting, importunate, which leaves us never, and will not be stilled, but whispers to us in the silence, with a fascinating sweetness that makes dull all the voices of the world.

That restless thirst of joy is the longing for the Soul, for our immortal selves, the heirs of the everlasting; and we shall hear those haunting whispers till they break forth into the song of the Eternal.

In a lull of weariness and fever, when we cease for a while from our desires and dreams, will come clear vision of the Soul, a taste of immortal valor, of imperious power, of triumphant joy. And thenceforth, for ever, we shall know that the Soul is; even when the clouds and darkness are heavy upon us, and our vision is gone, we shall endure to the end, remembering that there is the Soul.

With that memory comes a sense of life, strong, exultant, that desires not the cloying, weakening sweetness of sensuous life; for it thirsts no more, after the first taste of the immortal waters; or thirsts for these alone. Nor will the soul cast forward any more hopes or fears into the future, either for this world, or the next, or any future life; for with the sense of the immortal treasure close at hand what shall a man need to hope for, or what shall he fear? Therefore the soul of man will stand upright, thirsting not for the feasts of the world, hoping no more, neither fearing any more.

Then shall follow peace. The heart's pains shall be stilled; softly, slowly shall the quiet of immortal might descend upon the soul from the greater Soul, and we shall understand how the gods can work for ever, yet not grow weary. There shall be peace from all imaginings, hopes shall no longer beckon us away from where our

treasure is; for with possession comes the payment of hope. Fear shall no longer lash us with the unpitying scourge that drives us to all cruelty and injustice, for where fear is, there is cruelty; where cruelty is, there is fear. We shall desire no more, for the fullness of life leaves nothing to be desired; nor shall we hate any more, for seeing ourselves in all things, how can we hate ourselves? The soul cannot hate its own exultant life. So shall come peace, the quiet of the heart, and glad heart's-ease.

And from heart's-ease shall follow peace through all the powers, that have so long been shaken by the fever of the world. And there shall come a recovery from all earthly pain, and the vigor of life restored to health like the young-eyed gods. Every power of man is now ready for the great work; but before he can undertake it, he must cease from the idols of the world, and their false worship. He must not longer follow the hot dusty ways of the men of desire, that they are driven along by fear and thirst for the banquets of the world. Nor will he desire these ways or endure them, for he knows the quiet pathway of the Eternal, where there is peace.

Ceasing from false idols, he begins to follow his Genius; and genius will set the immortal imprint on all he does. For its way is a divine way, a yoke that is easy, and a burden that is light. And the secret of genius, of the Genius in every man, is easily told. In the heart of every man, after he has caught the vision, and knows that the Soul is; after he has reached peace, heart's-ease, and quietude of all his powers; after he has ceased from idols, and drawn back from the hot pathways of desire; in his clean heart there shall yet dwell one desire, one longing, one imperious and haunting wish; and it shall seem to him that nothing in life could be sweeter than to carry that wish out; he shall have for it all enthusiasm, and the willingness of a freeman's service. And that secret desire of the heart is his life's work, the one thing he can do supremely well; the private revelation whispered to him alone, that not even the gods can overhear; not even the sages can foretell.

And his life's work a man will perform with such ready joy, with such enthusiasm and winning power, that all men shall be fascinated, and won by it; and will offer him all they possess for some share of it. Whether it be some new and excellent way of dealing

with the natural world, or with the souls of men, there is this secret for everyone. For a statue is only a stone transformed by the power of the Soul, and the greatest picture is a thin layer of pigments stretched over canvas threads; but the Soul's touch makes these mean things divine. And so is it with all its works. Taking the common words that fall from all men's lips, the common dreams that dwell in all men's hearts, the Genius weaves them into a song that shall last for ages, and outwear the hills, ringing in men's hearts and awakening their longing for the song everlasting. So too the twanging of wires may be transformed by the Soul into a magical enchantment, that shall make men forget all the heart's pains, if only the Genius be in it.

And there is nothing in all this mortal world that may not be likewise transformed; even common things and mean are awaiting their poet, their artist, their musician. For all men are inwardly creative and full of genius; and some day each shall bring his gift to life.

And if there be this divine way for the rocks and ores of the natural world, so that they shall breathe with living beauty, what divinity may not come into our meeting with human souls. They indeed can be enkindled with immortal fire, set ringing with a diviner music, lit with colors that never sunrise nor the flowers nor the hills in their purple garments dreamed of; become resonant with a music that shall dull the long chant of the seraphim.

Here is the great work for every man: to express that secret vision which the gods whisper to him alone; in his dealings with the natural world; in his ways with the souls about him. And for each man, the guide is, the secret desire of his clean heart. That is what he came into the world to do; that is what he will do better than all living, past or to come. That is what all men will be ready to reward him for doing, as emperors have vied with each other in heaping reward on painters of things beautiful.

Yet a man who follows his path shall need steadfast endurance, and firm faith; nor shall the way be too smooth or easy for his feet; for he has a bad past behind him, and a world yet unclean round about him. So shall he keep steadfastness in his heart.

Faith too must go with him, a glow of fire, a surplus power to which all tasks are easy; for what is most admirable in the world has been done almost without effort, with a divine ease; yet great effort has gone to the preparation for it.

Last comes intentness; the bending of a steady will upon the task; for a statue is dreamed by the soul, yet it is carved by firm hands and steady blows, and only the greatest artists can draw a perfect line. And in like manner only a valiant soul can deal fairly with another, even with a little child.

THOUGHTS AND WORDS.

Thoughts and words are such a common, everyday affair, that it almost seems preposterous to speak about them. A thought is something which we express in a word; and a word is something which we use to express our thought with.

This definition seems true enough and precise enough. Yet it has been well said that the oftener we hear the name of a thing, the more certain we become that we know all about it—that we understand the very nature of the thing itself. And there are endless sides to the subject of "thoughts and words" which do not begin to be touched by this definition.

Thought and word always stand in some kind of a relation to each other. Of this there is no doubt. But do they depend upon each other for existence? Is it true, as some eminent scientists seem to believe, that where there is no word, there is no thought?

I make so bold as to answer this question in the negative. Most decidedly, no. It is not true. We all know whole regions of thought perfectly accessible to us, yet for which the best of our vocabulary seems too poor and too dull. Then, again, people who are familiar with several languages, know that there are shades of thought best expressed in French, or German, or English. There are expressions which cannot be translated even from "American" into English, let alone older and richer languages; for instance, the Sanskrit.

More than this, I for one am perfectly sure that there can be and is thought, where there is no word at all. Listen to this little illustration: One day I was walking on the shore at one of the English seaside resorts and felt something tugging at my dress. I looked and saw a very small boy with unusually bright eyes, such bright eyes as I have known several deaf and dumb children to possess, and this child also, I knew for a deaf and dumb mute the moment I caught sight of him. There were also another little boy and a little girl, all of them grouped around a penny-in-the-slot machine. I asked what they wanted, but the two other children held back and giggled shyly, while the dumb creature went into a long explanation with signs and gestures and wonderfully changeful expressions of his little face, and told me how he had a farthing, and

his brother had two, and his sister had four—a whole penny, and they wanted some sweeties and put all their money into the slot, and shook the machine, and shook it again, but there was something wrong with it and they could get nothing. And they are three children and very small, and there is a big crowd at the confectioner's shop where the machine belongs, and no one would pay any attention. So I must walk with them and settle matters. And of all he said, I assure you I understood every word. So you see what a lot of thought and forethought, and even judgment, there was in a little child, for whom spoken or written word had no existence whatever.

They say that Lord Byron used to say with regard to the French word *ennui,* that the English had not the *word,* but they had the *thing.* And I think that the same can be justly said about any thought of any degree, from the vaguest impression to the most positive knowledge. We have them all. All that the world has ever thought, learned or aspired to, all that the world is thinking, learning or aspiring to now, or ever shall think, learn or aspire to, is ours. It is ours without any limitations and reservations; always at our beck and call; always ready to come in touch with us or at least to overshadow us.

Then what is our difficulty? Why is it that we are not consciously and confidently in possession of the universal wealth of thought? Why is it that for most of us, it is most decidedly an effort to follow any kind of argument? Why are there so many people who are perfectly unable to catch what you mean exactly, when you speak to them?

I can see three causes for this unfortunate state of affairs.

The first and the nearest home is our extreme self-centeredness. It makes us obtuse, narrow, limited, unresponsive in all our dealings with each other. Most people, when listening to you always seem to mind, not what you say, but what is in their own minds, and are glad of an opportunity to say their own say. Most people decidedly hear what they think you are likely to say, or what they wish you to say, and not at all what you really say. Max Müller tells us in his delightful book, "Auld Lang Syne," that when a young man he was once lecturing on "The Origin of Language," and being very full of his subject was very enthusiastic, and his chief point was that

the oldest language on Earth was not the Hebrew at all, as religious England believed at the time, but that there were much older languages than Hebrew—Sanskrit, for instance. When he had finished and was duly applauded and many people came to congratulate him, there was one lady who was especially effusive and she said, "Thank you so much Mr. Müller. I am so glad you also believe that Adam and Eve spoke Hebrew in Paradise." This example of the unresponsiveness of the audience is, I assure you, not at all exaggerated.

The next cause of the destitution of our thought is that we white people in general are used to one way only of exercising our minds. We think from particulars to universals; first taking separate facts and details, and then trying to build out of them some complete system which can be applied to generalities. Broadly speaking, this is the way European thought has operated since the time of Aristotle. This is the way all of our accepted sciences—medicine, history, mathematics or political economy operate. This is the way even such an abstract work as Kant's Critique of Pure Reason has been written, and, dealing with small matters, all the time details, peculiarities, even exceptions, we too often lose sight of the general idea that underlies them all, and get hopelessly lost among things which, in themselves, really matter very little.

Not so in the case of the Eastern mind. The various tribes and nations inhabiting India, the few representatives of thinking China that we know anything about, even the Russians, to a very large extent, do not use their minds that way at all, and could not use them that way even if they tried. They have remained alien to the extreme development of the individualism of the Western nations. Their mind works from universals to particulars, taking in all the details in one general thought, and often substituting the various aspects of the same basic thought for each other.

What I say may seem obscure. I had better give an example. *Shankara,* the great Vedanta teacher, speaks of *Prana* as fire in one place, as imagination in another, as our ability of changing place, or walking, in a third, and so on. And why? Simply because for him all these were variations of the same *Prana*—the going out force, the great forward Breath of the *Upanishads;* the force that moves from within without; and being such, for him they are one and the same thing; the one includes all the others; the one suggests all the others. An Oriental author in general, when he has said "sight," for instance, naturally supposes that he has also said fire, color, imagination, walking; also eyes—organ of sight; and feet—means of walking. Generalities, universals, are never far from an Oriental mind. And a truly Oriental mind does not seem to be able to deal with

units, individuals, details, in any other way but by viewing them in the light of something universal; either a law, or an interest, or a use. It is so in all Oriental writings, as everybody knows who has studied them at all.

Perhaps this absence of the true feeling of units and details is at the foundation of the well known Oriental indifference to death. What matters one man more or less, and what matters if that man be I?

Now let us return to the Western mind. Suppose a Western man, European or American, very clever, but altogether unprepared: and suppose that this mind finds that some author mixes up, in an unaccountable sort of way, the common image of a man's feet and the beautiful poetic idea of heavenly fires. What will he think? Surely he will think that there is a mistake somewhere, perhaps a misprint, or else that it is pure and simple nonsense. I would think so myself, if I were not half Asiatic by birth.

To be just all around, I must say that both the Oriental and the Western way of thinking have some disadvantages. Asiatic thought, dealing with universals alone, often becomes so remote and so abstruse as to have little hold on the everyday facts of our lives. Sometimes it falls short of its object and it always loses a lot of motive power. On the other hand, Western thought cannot help dissipating its energy in the perfect maze of all kinds of denominations, subdivisions, exceptions and one-sided cranky theorizings in general. It seems, for the most part, to be beating about the bush without ever touching the one essential point.

I trust and hope that it is reserved for American thought to strike the happy medium between the two and so to solve many a troublesome problem that mortals are now suffering from.

The third cause of the limitation of our thoughts is that modern man grossly underestimates the properties and powers of the word. Words also have the mysterious power of bringing forth thoughts of which a man was hitherto unconscious. Words are not mere masks or symbols of thoughts, they have a life of their own, they are living things.

Take any mystery teaching, whether it be the Hebrew Book of Job, the Sanskrit *Upanishads,* or the modern Light on the Path. In all of these you feel the potent living power of words, quite above their literal meaning. Even disfigured and mutilated as they are by translations, you cannot help feeling that in these books every word was assigned its place not by chance, but by strict choice. The words, as they were grouped in the originals, evidently were meant not only to convey a certain meaning, but to produce a certain effect, probably by means of vibrations and probably almost a physical

effect, so as to awaken in the listeners certain trains of thought, and certain associations of ideas, the best adapted to make clear for them doctrines which their reasoning alone would be utterly unable to grasp.

A word ought to be able to evoke in the mind great numbers of living thoughts and various moods through vibration, by touching some sensitive, though perhaps not quite material, point in our brains. Instead, by disuse, the word has lost its wings; there is hardly any magic in its sound; and it has become only the husk of thought, at best only a symbol.

Another illustration. I have two sisters. One is about two years younger than I, the other much younger, so much younger that I taught her most things she knows. One day I was sick in bed, and my second sister was to give the little one her lesson. It was geography, about the forests of Siberia, and, amongst other animals inhabiting it, an ovod was mentioned. Now, be it understood, that an ovod is only a fly, an especially vicious gadfly, which bites cattle and drives them mad. But the little sister did not know it, and asked its meaning; and the moment I heard a certain tremor in the teacher's voice, I knew she did not know it either. But, of course, she did not want to show her ignorance before the little one; she is exceedingly quick-witted and never lacks a word. So she says, in a grave and pensive sort of voice, "An ovod? Why, child, don't you know what an ovod is? Well, it is one of those things only few people can understand, and no one can explain." I was young then and was very indignant at her ingenious untruthfulness. But since then, I have often thought that the whole occurrence was allegorical; and, more than allegorical, it was prophetic.

How many wise men, scientists, philosophers, theologians, when we go to them for help in our perplexities, answer just like that young humbug: Well, child, this is one of these things which only a few can understand, and no one can explain.

Well, I, for one, hold that there is nothing in the world which cannot be explained and understood. As I said before, the domain of universal thought, in all its branches, is ours, without reservations and unlimitedly. But it is also true that before we can understand everything, many a thing is to be changed in us. First of all, we must shake off our narrow self-centeredness and lack of responsiveness to other people's thoughts and moods; in fact, we must grow more sympathetic to each other. Then we must change our mode of thinking, we must enlarge our thought and make it able to work from particulars to universals, and, as well, from universals to particulars. And also we must learn how to use the word so that it becomes a living power again.

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